Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended). A method for confirming that a predetermined recipient of an ~~information-bearing notification~~ electronically transmitted word sequence has received and read the ~~notification~~ word sequence, comprising:

storing voice characteristic data of the predetermined recipient;

receiving by the predetermined recipient the ~~information-bearing notification~~ word sequence from a sender of the ~~notification~~ word sequence;

presenting the ~~information-bearing notification, including a presenting a~~ word ~~sequence,~~ sequence to the predetermined recipient;

accepting an audio input from the predetermined recipient in response to presenting the word sequence;

determining whether the accepted audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the presented word sequence;

comparing the voice characteristic data to the accepted audio input to determine if the accepted audio input substantially matches the voice characteristic data; and

if the accepted audio input matches the presented word sequence and substantially matches the voice characteristic data, transmitting a confirmation to the sender of the ~~notification~~ word sequence, indicating that the predetermined recipient has received and read the presented word sequence.

3. (Previously Presented). The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the word sequence to the predetermined recipient includes presenting a graphical representation of the word sequence.

4. (Original). The method of claim 3 wherein presenting the graphical representation of the word sequence includes presenting said graphical representation on a display.

5. (Previously Presented). The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the word sequence to the predetermined recipient includes presenting an audible representation of the word sequence.

6. (Original). The method of claim 5 wherein presenting the audible representation of the word sequence includes playing a stored audio recording of the word sequence.

7. (Original). The method of claim 5 wherein presenting the audible representation of the word sequence includes applying a speech synthesis algorithm to the word sequence to form the audible representation.

8. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 5 wherein presenting the audible representation of the word sequence includes transmitting the audible representation over a telephone network and accepting the audio input includes ~~receiving~~ transmitting the audio ~~response~~ input over the telephone network.

9. (Previously Presented). The method of claim 1 wherein determining whether the accepted audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the word sequence includes applying a speech recognition algorithm to the accepted audio input.

10. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 9 wherein applying the speech recognition algorithm includes computing a resulting word sequence from the audio input and determining whether the audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the word sequence includes comparing the resulting word sequence to the word sequence ~~of~~ received by the ~~notification~~ predetermined recipient.

11. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 9 wherein applying the speech recognition algorithm includes time-aligning the presented word sequence ~~of the notification~~ and the audio input.

12. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 9 wherein applying the speech recognition algorithm includes computing a match score characterizing a similarity between the <u>presented</u> word sequence and the audio input.

13. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 12 wherein determining whether the audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the <u>presented</u> word sequence includes comparing the match score with a threshold score.

14. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 1 wherein accepting the audio input includes accepting a plurality of segments of the audio input each associated with a different part of the <u>presented</u> word sequence ~~of the notification~~, and wherein determining whether the accepted audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the <u>presented</u> word sequence includes determining whether each of the plurality of segments of the audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the associated part of the <u>presented</u> word sequence.

15. (Original). The method of claim 14 wherein presenting the word sequence includes presenting each of the different parts of the word sequence in turn and accepting the audio input associated with that part before presenting another of the different parts.

20. (Currently Amended). Software stored on computer readable media for causing a
computer system to perform functions including:

storing voice characteristic data of a predetermined recipient;

receiving, by the predetermined recipient, ~~an information-bearing notification~~ a word
sequence from a sender of the ~~notification~~ word sequence;

presenting the ~~information-bearing notification, including a presenting a~~ word
~~sequence,~~ sequence to the predetermined recipient;

accepting an audio input from the predetermined recipient in response to presenting
the word sequence;

determining whether the accepted audio input includes the predetermined recipient
speaking the presented word sequence;

comparing the voice characteristic data to the accepted audio input to determine if the
accepted audio input substantially matches the voice characteristic data; and

if the accepted audio input matches the presented word sequence and substantially
matches the voice characteristic data, transmitting a confirmation to the sender of
the ~~notification~~ word sequence, indicating that the predetermined recipient has
received and read the presented word sequence.

22. (Currently Amended). An automated notification confirmation system comprising:

means for storing voice characteristic data of a predetermined recipient;

means for receiving, ~~an information-bearing notification~~ by the predetermined recipient, a word sequence from a sender of the ~~notification~~ word sequence;

means for presenting the ~~information-bearing notification, including a presenting a~~ word ~~sequence,~~ sequence to the predetermined recipient;

means for accepting an audio input from the predetermined recipient in response to presenting the word sequence;

means for determining whether the accepted audio input includes the predetermined recipient speaking the presented word sequence;

means for comparing the voice characteristic data to the accepted audio input to determine if the accepted audio input substantially matches the voice characteristic data; and

means for transmitting a confirmation to the sender of the ~~notification~~ word sequence, indicating that the predetermined recipient has received and read the presented word sequence, if the accepted audio input matches the presented word sequence and substantially matches the voice characteristic data.